

PATENT

D. REMARKS

Status of the Claims

Claims 1-2, 4-6, 8-9, 11-15, and 17-19 are currently present in the Application, and claims 1, 8, and 14 are independent claims. Claims 1, 4, 8, 11, 14, and 17 have been amended, claims 3, 7, 10, 16, and 20 have been cancelled. No claims have been added in this Response.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants note with appreciation the indication by the Examiner that original claims 4-7, 11-13, and 17-20 are objected to as depending on a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicants have amended the independent claims and added limitations found to be allowable in claims 3, 7, 10, 16, and 20.

Drawings

Applicants note that the Examiner did not indicate whether Applicants' formal drawings, filed concurrently with the application, are acceptable. Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to indicate whether Applicants' formal drawings are acceptable in the next Office Communication.

Specification

The specification was objected to because of a minor informality appearing on page 1. Applicants have amended the specification and corrected the informality. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to withdraw the objection in light of Applicants' amendment.

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Claim Objections Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.75

Claim 8 was objected to under 37 C.F.R. § 1.175 for containing a minor informality. The formality has been corrected. Consequently, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to withdraw the objection.

Claim Rejections - Alleged Obviousness Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Original claims 1-3 and 14-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious, and therefore unpatentable, over U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0074559 to Lee Riggs (hereinafter "Riggs"). Original claims 8-10 were rejected under § 103 as being obvious, and therefore unpatentable, over U.S. Patent Publication No. 2001/0037331 to Steven D. Lloyd (hereinafter "Lloyd") in view of Riggs.

While Applicants do not believe that Riggs or the combination of Lee and Riggs teach or suggest Applicants' invention as claimed in the rejected claims, Applicants have amended each of the independent claims and added limitations that have been deemed allowable by the Examiner in order to expedite prosecution and in order to accelerate the issuance of Applicants' remaining claims.

Accordingly, by way of Applicants' amendments to the independent claims, the rejection of independent claims 1, 8, and 14 are now moot. Limitations found to be allowable in original dependent claims 3, 7, 10, 16, and 20 have been incorporated into the independent claims and these dependent claims have been cancelled. Consequently, independent claims 1, 8, and 14 are each allowable as each includes limitations

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already found to be allowable by the Examiner. In addition, each of the remaining claims depends, directly or indirectly, on these allowable independent claims and, therefore, are allowable for at least the same reasons that the independent claims are allowable.

Conclusion

As a result of the foregoing, it is asserted by Applicants that the remaining claims in the Application are in condition for allowance, and Applicants respectfully request an early allowance of such claims.

Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner contact the Applicants' attorney listed below if the Examiner believes that such a discussion would be helpful in resolving any remaining questions or issues related to this Application.

Respectfully submitted,

By Joseph T. Van Leeuwen
 Joseph T. Van Leeuwen, Reg. No. 44,383
 Van Leeuwen & Van Leeuwen
 Attorneys for Applicant
 Telephone: (512) 301-6738
 Facsimile: (512) 301-6742